

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Self- Determination Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

April 18, 2024

Present: Victoria Berrey, Michael Carey, Richard Dier, Jordan Feinstock, Jon Francis, Diana Padilla-Garcia, Wilmary Torres, Lori Walker, Miriam Erberich, Soccoro Curameng, Alex Kopilevich – **Committee Members**

Denise Juarez, Gabriela Eshrati, Robin Monroe, Silvia Haro, Elena Tiffany – **NLACRC Staff Members**

Xotchitl Gonzalez – DDS, Claudia Wegner – Claudia Cares, Tim Jin, Jacqueline Bisquera, Kristianna Moralis – DVU, Ruchi Sharma, Fernando Gomez – Integrated Community College, Reiko Umeda, Gume Garza – Interpreter, Sol Garza – Interpreter, Jasmine Barrios-Minutes Services, Mrs. A Dunbar, Noa Goldfill, Karla (no last name given), Rubi Saldana – ICC, Erica Rodriguez - **Guests**

Absent: Ellen Jannol

I. Call to Order, Introductions and Housekeeping

Lori Walker called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

Spanish interpretation services were announced.

NLA staff and Committee members introduced themselves to the group and explained their personal connections to SDP.

II. Public Input and Comments

Lori shared contact information for issues related to SDP:

NLA SDP Email: selfdetermination@nlacrc.org

SDP Hotline: 818-756-6314

Lori noted that the hotline is currently down, but the issue is in the process of being resolved. Please use the email addresses to contact the Committee.

Committee Direct Email: nlacrcsdlac@gmail.com

Alex Kopilevich shared that there will be an NLA Vendor Fair on May 7th and 8th from 10am to 2pm in Chatsworth.

Fernando Gomez from Integrated Community College requested information about when the RFP for coaching grants will become available. NLA is looking to have the RFP open by the end of April or early May.

Gabriela Eshrati announced the NLA Expo in SV on Amy 17th from 1-7pm and in the Antelope Valley on May 11th from 11am to 4pm. The Expo is for all age units and sections highlighting a

certain type of vendor.

Lori shared 3 resources:

- California Health and Human Services Agency, which oversees DDS, which oversees NLA, is in the one-year process of creating a master plan for the developmental services. The Services are being developed because California's developmental disability system is deeply connected to other health and social systems. The master plan will seek to create and strengthen bridges that connect the developmental system Services to other critical systems across California's Health and Human services and other systems and services, including education, housing, employment, transportation and safety. This master plan, master plan or developmental Services establish a more quality, driven and consumer-friendly friendly for individuals and families receiving developmental services. The plan is estimated to be completed in March of 2025, and they had their first meeting on April 10, and the next meeting will be April 24th.
- The SDP website is in the process of being redesigned, and more information will be shared later in the agenda.
- Lori attended the statewide Self-determination Advisory Committee, made up of the 21 regional Center chairs or designees and they have posted their Best Practices form for submission to their listed platform.

Lia Cervantes-Lerma with SCDD shared that the SCDD Office is available for anyone interested in learning more about resources. Trainings are also available, and information on the upcoming events is available on the SCDD website.

Wilmary Torres made the announcement that she will no longer serve as the client's Rights Advocate for the Committee and will be passing on the role to Erica Rodriguez. Wilmary will support Erica through the transition period. Erica introduced herself as a family member of a disabled individual; she is excited to serve as the new Clients Rights Advocate.

III. Approval of March Meeting Minutes

Revisions to the Minutes will be made to note that Lia Cervantes Lerma is not a member of the Committee and should be listed on the Attendance List as a Guest. In addition, Josefina Romo has resigned from the Committee and should be removed from the Attendance List. Alex Kopilevich was absent at the meeting and it should be noted on the attendance list.

On page 3 of the minutes, the number of CSCs that Lori mentioned should be changed from "100" to "many."

M/S/C (J. Feinstock/A. Kopilevich) To approve the meeting minutes as presented.

IV. Committee-Centered Plan (CCP) Updates

The Committee provided updates to their assigned portions of the Committee Centered plan. Lori requested that all presenters create a concise summary of their report to add to the Quarterly Summary Report.

1. Goal 1 Presentations-Jordan, Lori and Richard, Richard, Alex, Ellen, Miriam, Alex

Goal: Review and update the current NLACRC SDP process for transitioning into the SDP and the year 2 and beyond, and ensure that it is timely and seamless for self-advocates and families with knowledgeable staff, accurate information, best practices, and less bureaucracy.

i. Objective 1: Identify barriers participants and families face – Jordan

This item was deferred as Jordan was delayed. He will work on this item and reach out to Lori if assistance is needed.

ii. Objective 2: Identify barriers that the NLA SDP Team faces – Richard

Currently, the level of staffing and difficulties navigating through SDP are challenging. Discussions are continuing at Best Practices meetings.

iii. Objective 3: Identify barriers that NLA faces – Richard

Staff turnover and lack of executive leadership have been barriers. NLA is making progress to address these issues and the Recruitment Committee is working through the process of hiring a new Executive Director.

iv. Objective 4: Identify barriers that CSCs face – Alex

Alex conducted a survey in-person and via Survey Monkey to get feedback for this information. 400-500 CSCs were sent a link to the survey and received 20 responses. Ten questions were asked to evaluate the best understanding of the barriers in the system.

Findings were that a vast majority of CSCs who participated are aware of SDP and are supervising cases involved in it. However, there's a notable desire for more knowledge about the program and openness to additional training. Participants expressed concerns about overwork, misuse of funds, lack of clarity in the program's structure, and dissatisfaction with IFs. There are mixed reviews about FMS and the competence of IFs. Suggestions for improvement include better training and testing for IFs., and continued trainings for CSCs to fully understand the SDP process and program as a whole.

v. Objective 5: Identify barriers that the FMS faces – Ellen

Lori Walker provided the information on Ellen's behalf.

Individual emails were sent to potential participants. Specifically asking what barriers, delays and issues they encounter. Names of the responders will not be shared, but to summarize, Ellen lists several challenges faced in the system, including outdated fiscal systems, lack of uniformity across the state's regional centers, delays in funding, administrative issues, and delays in processing spending plan changes. Ellen also noted She also highlights some working aspects, such as establishing direct contacts for problem-solving and having dedicated teams for SDP enrollment in regional centers, RC Roundtable Discussions, looping FMS in on NLA changes that impact participants in FMS and having a dedicated team for SDP who handle cases

as opposed to all CSC's handling SDP participants.

- vi. Objective 6: Identify barriers that IFs face – Miriam
Miriam posted on 2 IF Slacks 3 times over 6 months and attended ID Roundtables to collect information that was put into the chat. She found that she had few participants as she was told that many IFs are fearful to go on record with complaints. Findings include that transitioning into subsequent years is done the day before the new spending plan begins, regardless of when the renewal process is started. Payments of the IFs take at least 3 months, and no issues are evaluated until 3 months have passed, causing further delays if problems arise later. The SDP team at NLA is collaborative, but the process is too slow on multiple levels. The main barrier is that the internal procedures are in need of a major overhaul. It was reported that other regional centers have streamlined their processes. The cause would be that other regional centers interpret the law in a way that benefits the client. Other barriers include the delay in getting technology approved, some IFs not working with NLA clients, there are no definite timelines and no accountability when delays arise.
Positive notes were that recent encounters with NLA seem more positive to participants and NLA may be the only regional center that has created an IF handbook.
- vii. Objective 7: Identify barriers that Service Providers Face – Alex
Alex conducted in-person surveys via Survey Monkey. Findings include that vendors expressed concerns about inconsistencies in procedures and billing across different administrative setups, including delayed reimbursements and ethical dilemmas with client payments. Although the SDP is seen as well-intended, its execution falls short of expectations due to various administrative hurdles. Suggestions for improvement include better mechanisms for tracking funds, standardization of procedures, and increased accessibility for all individuals, regardless of their resources or access to information. Additionally, there's a call for better coordination between service coordinators and vendors to alleviate workload burdens and ensure that SDP remains a viable option for clients.

2. Goal 2 Presentation-Jordan

Goal: Ensure that self-advocates are as involved as they want to be in the SDP program (break down bureaucracy so they can participate) and explore the low participation of SDP participants (self-advocates) coming to our monthly SDLAC meetings.

- i. Objective 1: Develop a survey for the SDP participants – Jordan
Jordan shared his survey with the Committee. The survey has 16 questions and has multiple answer formats, including multiple-choice, open-ended and rating scales. The questions themselves were developed to get a clear understanding of the barriers faced by FMS, including their involvement with the SDLAC.

3. Goal 3 Presentation-Victoria and Wilmary

Goal: Increase access, support, and outreach efforts for SDP in underserved communities

Information was shared regarding the demographics of the consumers that NLA serves as it pertains to the objectives. Demographics of participants in the Self-Determination Program at NLA highlight a significant gap between the racial composition of participants and the local population. It was noted that out of the 47% Hispanic population among all NLA consumers, the SDP program has a Hispanic representation of 20%. Efforts to bridge this gap include enhancing outreach to Hispanic and Spanish-speaking communities. Suggestions for improvement include tracking the reach and effectiveness of outreach efforts and providing support in multiple languages. Additionally, ideas such as creating support groups in Spanish are proposed to serve diverse communities better.

4. Goal 4 Presentation-Richard

Goal: Committee members, participants, family members, service providers, and service coordinators should learn together about different aspects of the SDP, Person-Centered Thinking, including Regional Center processes, DDS directives, roles and responsibilities of Regional Center service coordinators, Participant Choice Specialists, IF, self-advocates, and family members.

Richard emphasized the importance of clarifying upper management's perspective on organizing the SDP. Training for Consumer Service Coordinators (CSCs) is highlighted as a crucial aspect, with the speaker expressing concern that current training may not adequately prepare CSCs for understanding family perspectives. They suggest collaborative efforts between committees and management to improve training.

Richard shared sample training materials to illustrate potential improvements. Suggestions include utilizing actual definitions of Self Determination in lieu of the dictionary definitions.

Richard highlights the importance of engaging with upper management and the board to address concerns about training and perceptions within the system. He suggested having an attorney on the committee to help identify points of tension and ensure mutual exploration of issues and emphasized the need for clarity on legal authority and the importance of simplifying the system for better understanding and compliance. Richard also expressed concern about the perception that participants are taking advantage of the system and stressed the need to uphold principles of responsibility. Richard expressed hope for continued dialogue with management and the board to share policy perspectives and address procedural concerns.

5. Goal 5 Presentation-Richard and Jon

Goal: Ensure that self-advocates are as involved as they want to be in the SDP program (break down bureaucracy so they can participate) and explore the low participation of SDP participants (self-advocates) coming to our monthly SDLAC meetings.

i. Objective 1: Develop a survey for the SDP participants

Jon noted the Committee's challenges in achieving their objectives, particularly regarding speaking permissions during board meetings. Despite these challenges, they remain optimistic about making progress, citing recent positive developments such as being invited to a Board Dinner. This invitation indicates a shift towards being recognized as a legitimate organization with valuable contributions to discussions.

Richard also acknowledges the leadership and persistence of Lori, highlighting her efforts in advocating for their committee's views. He remains optimistic about establishing an open mechanism by the end of the year, allowing their committee to present at board meetings, which would signify a significant milestone in their advocacy efforts. John and Richard highlighted the importance of effective communication, collaboration, and perseverance in achieving their goals within the SDP framework.

6. Goal 6 Presentation-Richard

Goal: Ensure that self-advocates are as involved as they want to be in the SDP program (break down bureaucracy so they can participate) and explore the low participation of SDP participants (self-advocates) coming to our monthly SDLAC meetings.

Richard requested to delve deeper into certain metrics regarding budgets and spending plans cross-referenced with ethnic groups and disabilities. Analyzing that budget information could reveal even more disparities. Additionally, Richard expressed interest in understanding the nature of disputes or disagreements between individuals with or without IFs and NLA. They highlight the importance of identifying recurring issues and finding resolutions. This item will be discussed further before their half-year review.

7. Goal 7 Presentation-Lori, Miriam, and Socorro

Goal: Ensure that self-advocates are as involved as they want to be in the SDP program (break down bureaucracy so they can participate) and explore the low participation of SDP participants (self-advocates) coming to our monthly SDLAC meetings.

Steps being taken include:

1. Updated self-determination program flyer is mailed to SDP participants with the final transitional IPP. The SDP flyer states the self-determination principles, orientation meeting dates, and support group information with contact email, website, information and phone number.
2. SDP News You Can Use is emailed monthly to all SDP participants and everyone who is signed up. Will receive the email blast. The monthly newsletter contains news and upcoming meetings and events in LA. The committee will continue to work with the LA and SDP management team on feedback and improvements.
3. Self-determination program resources flyer lists the resources available to participants desiring to transition to self-determination and current SDP participants. The flyer lists information on SDLC, the SD support group, coaching services, the NLASDP website, the SDP newsletter, the DDS SDP website, the SCDD/SDP website, the DDS SDP Ombuds person, LA SDP contact list with website list. The SDP supervisor emails this flyer to orientation, attendees and current SDP participants.

V. Implementation Updates

A. NLA Update - Silvia Haro

The SDP Report is presented in the packet.

As of April 1st:

Participants have completed Orientation: 805 (increased by 28)

Total number of budgets that are certified: 398 (increased by 12)

Total number of budgets that are in the certification process: 3

Total number of spending plans that are approved: 346

Total number of spending plans in progress: 49

Total number of PCPs completed: 389

Total number of participants that have opted out of SDP after enrolling: 4

Total number of Inter-Regional Center Transfers (out):3

Total number of participants that have fully transitioned into SDP with approved spending plans and active SDP IPPs: 346 (increased by 28)

B. DDS Update

There are no updates at this time.

C. SCDD Update - Lia Cervantes-Lerma

There are no updates at this time.

IX. SDP Challenges and Successes

There was a question related to how races and ethnicities are listed on the SDP Report. NLA reported that the information comes from responses to how consumers self-identify in race/ethnicity.

X. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

XI. Adjournment

Lori Walker adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Submitted by:
Minutes Services

